

# BACK TO GOD

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*by*

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*With a Preface by*  
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

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# P R E F A C E

*by* .

## THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

THE publishers of this book told me that they wished to publish a book which might assist the Appeal which I recently issued to the Nation entitled a Recall to Religion. I could not but be gratified by their wish. This book is the result. They have asked me to preface it by a word of commendation. I do so readily.

The Vicar of Leeds, as this book will show, man of vigorous mind, deep earnestness wide experience. I feel sure that many who read it will be helped by him to begin to renew the Christian life and witness.

COSMO CANTUAR

ETH PALACE

il 17, 1937

## FOREWORD

THIS little book is addressed primarily to those who have goodwill towards religion, but recognize no very definite responsibility in regard to it. It has been written during Lent under rather heavy pressure of other work, and I am keenly conscious of its imperfections.

I have made some use of articles contributed to *The Liverpool Post*, and am much indebted to the Editor for giving me permission to do so. Some other obligations are acknowledged in footnotes, but there are still others which I cannot trace.

W. T. E.



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## INTRODUCTION

THE "Recall to Religion" by the Archbishop of Canterbury on the last Sunday night of 1936 has not fallen upon deaf ears. It has been received with a general agreement that there was a real need for such a special and solemn appeal, with thankfulness that it was made, and with hope that there may be a serious and widespread response to it. There is no need to take a pessimistic view of our moral condition before we can agree that this is a time of softness and indecisiveness; that we have gone a very long way in making excuses for moral and spiritual indolence; and that it would be a wholesome astringent for us if, for a change, we were to give heed to stern words, even of reproof; or, if we will not suffer reproof (which is in itself an indication of our softness), then of recall to a stricter and more worthy way of life. Morally and spiritually we are adrift, which would matter less if there was any sign that this drift was giving serious concern to many people. But drifting is always easier than battling against the tide, and ease is greatly sought after to-day.

It is a serious question whether we have not for some years past been living on moral capital stored up by our forefathers, and inherited by us as part of the great tradition of English life. Men and women who have, almost without thought, thrown off the religious habits of their fathers, usually fail to recognize how much they owe to the inheritance they are expending. Not one of them but has drunk deeply of a well of living water which is the reservoir of all that is best in the nation's life. Even as he learned to speak the words of his mother-tongue there were carried into his mind the ideas and sentiments and convictions of the grave and reverent traditions of our race. The soul within him is not only supported day by day, but was itself moulded and shaped by these deep things. Has he no responsibility for maintaining, not to say enriching, the heritage? In too many instances, apparently not. He stands aloof as though he had no responsibility at all. He criticizes the churches, probably in a perfectly friendly way, because he has no prejudices against religion. He dislikes ministers of religion in general, except those whom he happens to know, who are very decent fellows. His whole attitude is one of apparent irresponsibility.

If there is, as the Archbishop said, and as

there certainly is, a deep instinct of religion and of sound morality in the common heart, which in any emergency manifests itself, it remains a question how far this moral sense is due to tradition rather than to immediate conviction. Meanwhile the great hope is in the fact that an increasing number of people are realizing that "the eye is not satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing; the human spirit is restless until it finds rest in God."

The association of this serious call with the Coronation of our King will give it much additional force with the more thoughtful. The Coronation is essentially a religious, sacramental act. It is an investing upon the King of a sacred trust from the Most High God. What a richness of significance there would be in this if the people made in their own hearts a solemn act of dedication to the sacred trust which with the King they share. If our King has grave responsibility in respect of his Kingship, how great is the responsibility of the people of this country in respect of their standing among the nations of the world. The moral leadership of civilization is in our hands more than in those of any other people. If we falter in indecision, drift into vagueness of moral resolve, the foundations of civilization are shaken. In

Europe to-day England is almost universally regarded as holding the fate of European civilization in trust, not only because her foreign policy is the balancing factor between peace and war, but also because we are the custodians of the principles of ordered liberty, which can only vindicate themselves if they are directed and inspired by moral conviction. Please God we may rise to the height of our opportunity!

The Archbishop's call will only have its full effect if in every possible way it is followed up by leaders of public thought and opinion. The churches have been given a lead which they will no doubt endeavour in various ways to follow. But all the responsibility must not be left to the clergy and ministers. The appeal was direct to every individual listener, and it is from the heart of each that the only effective response can come.

# SECTION I

THE PRESENT CONDITION

## FAVOURABLE WINDS

AT the outset let us attempt some survey of the moral and spiritual conditions which obtain at the present time, which create the environment in which we have to think and speak and act and which in themselves constitute our problem; and it is important in making such a survey to try to do full justice to the moral qualities of the English people of this generation.

There is indeed very much for which to be thankful. There is in the people of this country an underlying moral sense which manifests itself in times of emergency in a very impressive way. Its moral instincts are sound, and there is a steadiness and stability of judgment which is the admiration of foreign observers. No doubt they think we have a shrewd eye for the main chance and are by no means always disinterested in our advocacy of any particular policy. But they know that in such a crisis as that which took the country by surprise regarding the monarchy, there are moral qualities in

the character of the English nation which enable us to judge soundly and behave reasonably to a degree which compels the respect of other nations.

In this respect we are not unworthy of our great inheritance. Professor W. Macneile Dixon, in his Northcliffe Lectures,<sup>1</sup> asks the question: "What tests should be applied to determine a nation's rank and place in history?", and answers it in the words, "Its worth to the world." England's worth is in the men it has produced, and in the "guiding principles for the government of life, supporting or regulating ideas, of assistance to humanity on the march towards greater harmony or greater happiness" which it has given the world. Of the guiding principles which England has given the chief is the simple, far-reaching idea of duty. When Conrad wrote of British sailors that "in their collective capacity they can be best defined as men who lived under the command to do well or perish utterly," he wrote words as true in the present tense as in the past. The Englishman would still wish to be, in the words of Professor Santayana, "the ideal comrade in a tight place."

When we falter, it is usually because we have

<sup>1</sup> W. Macneile Dixon, *The Englishman*, p. 74.



no clear conviction as to where the path of duty lies. This was so in regard to Abyssinia. Our conduct in that issue is open to serious criticism. We were half-hearted. Why? Because the average Englishman was undecided whether it was our duty to support Abyssinia at all costs, or whether our duty was limited by the duty of avoiding too grave a risk of plunging Europe into a Great War.

As Sir Edward Grigg wrote in *The Faith of an Englishman*:

"Britain is never united upon anything unless the depths of her moral being are stirred. If the calculating side of her is reinforced by moral convictions, she knows exactly what she ought to do, but never otherwise. When the globes of her brain are at issue, her infirmity of these puzzles and shocks the world."

That is true, and so also is the statement in the quotation that he gives from a personal letter about our conduct of the Abyssinia issue:

"I can't see how we, the vast majority of us, can fairly be blamed. I believe that we quite honestly and sincerely wanted, and still want, to do the right thing. But what was the right thing to do? That is what we have been unable to decide, and still don't know."

One thing certain is that the whole country was deeply moved to indignation at the apparent injustice of the terrible affair: and it can hardly be denied that, besides the high conception of duty, our nation has made a great contribution to the practice of the fundamental principle of justice. British justice can in general be relied upon in every country where it is administered, and that fact enhances enormously the prestige of Britons among native peoples. Wilhelm Dibelius says that we are very skilful in disguising imperialistic aggrandizement under the cloak of moral motives, but that our often generous treatment of a defeated foe is not to be dismissed as sheer hypocrisy. Though no honest patriot will seek to defend certain episodes in the process of expansion of the British Empire, it remains that in all parts of the world we sincerely tried to act justly between ourselves and man wherever our writ runs.

It is equally true that these dominant and guiding ideas of duty and justice have derived directly from our religion. "The strong religious instinct of the Englishman, absolutely genuine and deep"; "a religious force of incomparable intensity, which is not the possession of a few religiously gifted spirits, but practically of an

entire nation"; are notable observations of the friendly but critical German writer already quoted. Obviously we do not cite them to encourage complacency, but rather to emphasize responsibility. In so far as we possess moral or religious prestige in the world, it is part of the inheritance of which this generation is the present custodian. It is of supreme importance for the future of the world that this prestige should in no wise be tarnished. In the words of the thirty members of the House of Commons who issued on March 23rd a letter supporting the Archbishop's Appeal, we may "greatly hope at this time that our patriotism may be something finer than we have ever known; that individually and collectively we may rededicate ourselves to service and to sacrifice; that our nation may achieve a finer leadership, and that in association with all who desire human progress we may avert disaster and secure a better world life."

When we are considering our moral inheritance from the past, it is only fair to point out that in some important ways this generation shows a notable advance. There is no doubt, for example, that what we conveniently call the "social conscience" of our people is very much more sensitive than it was. Things

which were at one time tolerated by the public conscience are to-day held in abhorrence. It is not within living memory, but it is not ancient history, that there was in East London a slave market where superfluous children were bought and sold. The complete condemnation of the *laissez-faire* policy in economics and industry was the unscrupulous exploitation of the labour of women and children and the complacency with which, apparently, the public conscience tolerated it. Though economic theory still very often stands in the way of social progress, there is to-day abundant evidence of a genuine desire to improve social conditions, and in education, housing, care of the sick and the unemployed, there has been an immense advance. England is a much more humane country than it used to be.

I am told, and I can well believe it, that there has also been a marked improvement in business integrity and the sense of fair dealing. Though the Lord Chief Justice had some strong things to say recently about the danger of bribery and corruption, illicit commissions and the like, I was told recently by a man in a responsible position in the insurance world that during the years of his experience the standard of honesty had risen, and he further said that

it was now so high a standard that we could hardly expect it to show any further improvement. "It is," he said, "about as high as it could be." That is only one man's testimony, but he evidently meant what he said. What is beyond doubt is that a great many men in business and professional life are not only very conscientious in these matters, but by encouraging the idea that their various occupations should be regarded as their means of service to the community, seek to balance the profit motive (which cannot be entirely eliminated) by the desire to benefit the public. I have heard the "service" motive derided as a mere advertising slogan, but I am convinced that that is an injustice.

As regards the "morals" of the people, in the generally accepted sense of that word, there has been a great change, and though there is much in the present situation which gives serious ground for disquiet, the change has been for the better. The gross viciousness which was practised in certain quarters a generation or two ago is really horrifying to read of. The traffic in little girls, the sordidness and extent of prostitution, the squalor of the haunts of vice were dreadful in the extreme. Sexual immorality was accompanied by a disgusting brutishness.

I have no wish to enlarge upon this, but in any estimate of moral progress these facts must be remembered. There has been a general advance in the sense of *decency* of behaviour. One indication of this is the diminution of drunkenness. There are fears that this diminution has been stayed, but as compared with a generation ago we are a soberer people. I remember as a child in a great city seeing drunken men, and women, rolling about the streets, and I remember my childish fears. One of my most horrific memories from quite early childhood is that of seeing a drunken woman being lifted out of a cab and carried into her house in the same street in which we lived. There is drunkenness to-day, and drunken people drive motor-cars sometimes, but the drunkenness is not so frequent nor is it so utterly beastly.

Concerning religion and its observances, no one can deny that there has been a decline in the sense of obligation to religious duties. On the other hand, for what it is worth, there is a widespread "interest" in religion, and a general goodwill towards the application in certain directions of Christian principles. There has been a change in emphasis in regard to the virtues most highly esteemed, and though this has involved serious loss in some ways there

has been gain in others. The utilitarian virtues were those which our fathers or grandfathers valued highly ; profitable, self-regarding virtues, like perseverance, industry, and thrift. Godly men were men who displayed these virtues to an excellent degree, and Divine Providence saw to it that they were suitably rewarded by success in life, particularly in business. I think it is to the credit of this generation that it is a little more honest as to its motives.

For all these things we may be profoundly thankful. There is indeed much to give encouragement. Nevertheless there is a general recognition that a recall to the ways of God is timely and necessary. Why? Because of certain adverse currents which seem to be gaining strength from day to day. It is these which we must now examine.

## ADVERSE CURRENTS

THE first reason why we welcome a recall to religion is that we have reason to fear that the whole foundation of moral conduct is being shaken by the growing secularism of the age.

It is no doubt true, as has been said, that there has been a diminution in gross vice and sordidness, such as drunkenness and prostitution, but over against this can anyone be complacent about the deep hold that gambling has obtained over the minds of the people, and its rapid spread among young men and women? What is the significance of the alarming spread of juvenile crime? If prostitution has diminished, is there not a general slackening of the standards of sexual behaviour? These are particular things, indicative of some deeper causes. It is not unimportant that these phenomena are accompanied by a marked decline in the religious sense of need for communion with the unseen, for God, for worship, and by a parallel decline in the sense of obligation amongst



professing Christians to their religious duties, a contentment with very low standards of spiritual attainment.

All these things are connected with the secular materialistic spirit which in these latter years has laid great hold upon us. The amazing material progress of the industrial era, the never-ending advance of scientific discovery and its application to the conditions of life, concentration upon questions of economics, unrestricted competition in commerce, national rivalries mainly economic and military, the development of transport and the craze for speed by land, air, and water: all these things have conspired to secularize the outlook of the modern man, till, in the words of Christopher Dawson, he "has not consciously denied the Christian tradition, he has simply lost sight of it in his concentration on material progress. His loss of faith is due not so much to a change of belief as to a change of attention—a turning away of the mind from spiritual to temporal things, which causes a blunting of the spiritual perceptions and a darkening of the soul."

The point seems to have been reached when, in the minds of many, Western civilization is identified with its most recent and superficial

expression. It is not surprising that the native of Central Africa believes that our civilization consists of the things brought to him by us which have in recent years radically changed his way of life and habits of thought. He has in fact seen more changes in the last twenty years than his forefathers experienced in twenty centuries. These changes have been brought about by his contact with Western civilization and the thrusting into his life of motor-cars, wireless, gramophones, and the cinema. To his mind these are the things which civilization stands for. If one tries to tell him that it is not so, that in fact Western civilization has its roots away back in a distant past, that it is a cultural and a moral inheritance which derives partly from the Romans and partly from the Greeks, and very largely from the Hebrews, he finds it impossible to understand what one is talking about. To him Western civilization is identified with things which did not exist half a century ago. That is natural to the Central African, and he is in no wise to be blamed, though his condition of mind in this respect constitutes a great problem for missionaries and others concerned in his education. What is much more ominous is that there is growing up a generation in England which tends to make the same false

identification. They are so much engrossed with the same things as have fascinated the native African that the moral and spiritual inheritance which is the basis of our civilization is very rarely actively present to their minds.

The secularizing process has been greatly hastened by the rapid urbanization of the population. Everyone is familiar with the externals of this change. We know that whereas some hundred and twenty-five years ago three out of every four children born in England were born in rural areas, and only one in a town or city, to-day the proportion is more than reversed. We know of the practical problems which this enormous shift of population has caused, and many of us have taken some part in the task of trying to solve them. What we have not perhaps so clearly recognized is the more deep-seated change which this urbanization has caused in the mental outlook of the people. A generation ago an Oxford college tutor, afterwards Provost of Queen's, the Rev. E. M. Walker, called attention to this in a university sermon, and the change has been much greater since then. He would be a rash person who would lightly say that the mental outlook of the town dweller was better or worse

than that of the countryman. But there need be no hesitation in saying that it is very different.

The mental characteristics of a child whose imagination has first been awakened by the sights and sounds of the countryside must be very different from those of a child whose curiosity has first been aroused by the sights and sounds of a city. Birds and beasts and flowers, the starry skies which speak of the Holy One Who inhabiteth eternity, contact with the simplicities of nature, and so forth, do not produce saints in every village, but they do induce a mental character different from that produced by shop windows, newspaper placards, cinemas and cinema posters, which are the first and constant stimulus of youthful imagination in the towns. And if there is this difference, there can be no doubt in what the difference largely consists: it is in the greater secularism of the city influences. It is, moreover, an important question whether the tendency of modern education does not intensify this influence. There is sometimes confusion, even in the minds of those responsible for the direction of education, between urbanization and civilization. The distinction between them is that one is secular and the other essentially spiritual.

The secularizing process has been further encouraged by the progressive splitting up of our common life into departments, till economics, politics, art, science, and other human interests and activities have come to be regarded as ends in themselves, working independently of any recognized common goal or purpose. Economics is but one example of this, though a conspicuous one. This field of activity and enterprise has been more and more dehumanized; that is to say, it has been regarded not so much as an integral part of the whole life of humanity, but as an independent world in which the only effective laws are purely economic ones, such as supply and demand in relation to labour and capital and various commodities, complicated by regard to national interests resulting in tariffs and similar devices. That the unchecked working of these laws has sometimes had absurd consequences has been accepted as inevitable. The system is in control, not we. That there is a paradox in this situation is obvious. This economic process which so enslaves us is the same as that by which we have been enabled to exploit and vastly increase the material wealth of the world. Our servitude is a by-product of our success.

The same paradox is to be seen in our

relation to machinery. The machine is in itself a magnificent example of the triumph of mind over matter. It has within it the possibility of ending man's age-long enslavement to laborious toil, and giving him leisure for craftsmanship and for moral and spiritual development. By a right use of machinery man could be delivered from harassing anxieties, in particular from the strain of a hand-to-mouth dependence upon the product of the labour of each day or week as it comes round. But in fact we are a long way from any such intelligent use of what our inventive brains have given us. We are not in control of our machinery; our machinery is, to an alarming extent, in control of us.

As in the sphere of economics and machinery, so it is in the world of science. Science has one immediate end in view, the pursuit of knowledge. But the application of scientific knowledge to the conditions of life is chaotic. The same science which is expending tremendous energy in the development of surgery and medicine, making research into the causes and cures of human ills, is also being directed towards the perfecting of ever-more deadly poison gases for the annihilation of whole populations; and the way in which highly

developed scientific technique is being devoted to purely ephemeral objects, without any consideration of their ultimate justification, is truly astonishing. It is the ideas that yield a large return in hard cash which are the most rapidly applied and extended. When the objectives of science are in fact beneficent, it is not science as such which determines them, but quite other considerations, such as humanitarianism or Christianity.

The supposed conflict between science and religion is a consequence of the lack of a co-ordinating principle. The real conflict is not between religion and science, but between religion and that delimitation of human knowledge which asserts (or asserted) that there can be no real knowledge except that which is reached by the scientific method of logical demonstration based upon the measurable results of experiment. This claim, now being abandoned, would rule out the knowledge acquired by the saints and mystics as not being "knowledge" at all. That was where the real conflict came in. It was the result, not of the progress of science, with which religion can have no quarrel, but of the divorce between science and vital human experience. The progress of science will be of unimaginable

value to the human race, so long as science is the servant of man's mind and not its master.

It is this sectionalizing of life which explains the rise of the Totalitarian State, which is an attempt to counteract the process of disintegration. All other authority having weakened to the point of disappearance, the authority of the State steps in to make everything subservient to its own ends, and the willingness of intelligent people to submit themselves almost to humiliation is accounted for by their keen sense of the need of something to unify life.

Hence the Totalitarian State has been able to master industry and brought the whole industrial system to heel to subserve its own needs. Hence its attempts similarly to master every other group activity, including religion, and to forbid the organization of free lesser communities or associations within the one single community of the nation. In this way it has achieved a very definite unification, but it has done nothing to lessen the secularization; on the contrary, it emphasizes it. The State is essentially a secular unit, attempting to dominate every interest, including the spiritual. Nazism does not solve the problem, it merely demonstrates on the grand scale how pressing the problem is.



The answer to Nazism is not mere denunciation, but practical proof that free citizens living under democratic institutions can find a truer bond of unity, a spiritual sense of purpose which will give cohesion to their common life. For life is more than either politics or economics, and what we need is more willingness to listen to the "ancestral voices" which speak of the possible freedom of man's soul and show the way to the true liberty of the spirit. Beneath all the perturbation which the present situation arouses there is the undertone of longing for spiritual deliverance. We are not colonies of ants or hives of bees. There is a vital difference between a mass organization which involves everybody in the toils of a soulless discipline and that free co-operation one with another which is the act of men with hearts large enough to house wide sympathies and minds trained to understand points of view other than their own. It is the difference between men who are mere cogs in a machine and men inspired by a living faith. The former is the ideal of Totalitarian States. The latter is the ideal of Christianity.

While the secularizing process has been going on, and partly as a consequence of it, we have

been witnessing a decline in the power of the moral motive and appeal of religion. The conception in the mind of the ordinary man of the meaning of such fundamental beliefs as the reality of sin, the need of forgiveness, and the atoning work of Christ, has undergone a far-reaching change, and we are beginning to realize that the change has brought with it such a serious loss of moral motive-power that steps must now be taken to recover the lost ground. The influence of humanism upon popular religious thought has been very profound. The ordinary man is not a systematic theologian. He has no apparatus of criticism in his mind with which to check the various ideas which reach him through all sorts of channels, and he is much more affected by them than he knows. By a process of permeation he has come to think of sin as a negative thing, no more than a regrettable stumble on the upward road. He attaches very little reality to the ideas of judgment or punishment, and is inclined to resent any suggestion of either. The Cross of Christ is not so much an atonement for sin as a supreme example of what the human spirit can attain to, contrasted with the callousness and brutality of the other human spirits by whom He was surrounded.

What results from this is clearly not Christianity. Christ remains as a supreme example, not much use as an example, because so obviously beyond our reach, and His teaching becomes an ethical system, not much use as an ethical system, because not sufficiently systematized, and for the most part irrelevant to present-day conditions. Dogmatic Christianity in the past has acted for generations as a moral astringent in the life of the community. Though there were always "lewd fellows of the baser sort" who lived without regard to the laws of God or man, to the great majority of the population Christianity meant the pursuit of virtue, and the moral ideals of Christianity were seriously regarded. There was a sense of obligation to religious duties and observances. Though to the less intelligent minds fear played too large a part as a deterrent from sin, yet the net result was a wholesome sense of duty to God and one's neighbour which has done more than anything else to give stability and integrity to the British character.

What we are now witnessing is a definite weakening of this moral appeal of religion. It is not, as has been said already, that there is more vice amongst us; on the contrary, gross viciousness of behaviour is probably less

frequent than it was. But there is a general relaxing of moral fibre, what the Archbishop of Canterbury called a softness and slackness. This is not unconnected with a presentation of Christianity from which the note of sternness has been eliminated, suggesting, in Fr. Ronald Knox's phrase, "the milk of human kindness beaten up into butter and served in a lordly dish." The virtues of kindness and tolerance and broadmindedness have been extolled out of all proportion to the sterner virtues. It is possible to admire a tolerance which is born, not of true generosity but of lack of conviction, and when tolerance is regarded as desirable from whatever cause it springs, danger point is reached. That is the position to which to-day we are approximating.

## THE TURN OF THE TIDE?

THE question now is: what grounds of hope are there that our present-day disintegrated common life will find some unifying principle, other and more spiritual than the political principle of the totalitarian state? Fascism and Nazism are an attempt to unify and co-ordinate the multifarious activities of men by subordinating them all to the interests of the state. The evils of this attempt are apparent. It is destructive of personal liberty and is clean contrary to all those liberal and democratic ideas which appeared to have won a hard victory and are now suffering eclipse. Is there any hope of something arising more spiritual, more truly human, to win men's allegiance and give meaning and purpose to their various and divergent interests?

One answer to this question is that suggested by Nicholas Berdyaev and Christopher Dawson, who believe that we are at the end of an epoch, that "the present phase of intense secularism is a temporary one, and that it

will be followed by a far-reaching reaction." These are Christopher Dawson's words. Berdyaev does not speak of a reaction, but of the beginning of a "new Middle Ages," in which there will be darkness rather than light, till we emerge into a new age of spiritual understanding. Both are agreed in thinking that the present phase is the climax of certain tendencies which began at the Renaissance and have now expended their force.

Berdyaev is quite explicit about this. "Modern history," he says, "now coming to an end, was conceived at the time of the Renaissance. *We are witnessing the end of the Renaissance.*" Not that the first Humanists and fathers of the Renaissance foresaw or intended what has since developed from their teaching; on the contrary, they never dreamed of an age governed as this is by mechanical and economic ideas. But while the Renaissance "liberated the creative forces of man and gave his powers their highest expression in art," it involved a self-destructive contradiction. On the one hand it exalted man and attributed to him unlimited powers; on the other hand it treated him as a natural being and not as a spiritual one. It started the movement which enormously increased man's

knowledge of physical nature and his use of it for his own purposes, and at the same time progressively divorced him from the source of his spiritual power. It began with a profound belief in human nature and is ending in a deep distrust of it. It led to gigantic experiments in the reorganization of life, and is ending in a complete demonstration of their failure. It has exhausted its own energies and has now no further contribution to make to human progress.

It is of course possible to dissent from this view, but I think such dissent can only be justified after careful consideration. Berdyaev argues it with impressive cogency. This at least is true, that in modern civilization the soul of man is imprisoned, and he would not be imprisoned if he had kept open the channels of communication between himself and the Divine. Here let Berdyaev speak for himself:<sup>1</sup>

“The flowering of the idea of humanity was possible only so long as man had a deep belief in and consciousness of principles above himself, was not altogether cut off from his divine roots. During the Renaissance he still had this belief and consciousness and was therefore not

<sup>1</sup> *The End of Our Time*, pp. 55-6.

yet completely separated; throughout modern history the European has not totally repudiated his religious basis. It is thanks to that alone that the idea of humanity remained consistent with the spread of individualism and of creative activity. The humanism of Goethe had a religious foundation: he kept his faith in God. The man who has lost God gives himself up to something formless and inhuman, prostrates himself before material necessity.

“Nowadays there is none of that ‘renaissential’ play and inter-play of human powers which gave us Italian painting and Shakespeare and Goethe; instead unhuman forces, spirits unchained from the deep, crush man and becloud his image, beating upon him like waves from every side. It is they, not man, who have been set free. Man found his form and his identity under the action of religious principles and energies; the confusion in which he is losing them cannot be re-ordered by purely human efforts.”

What, then, is the remedy for this? Merely an attempt to return to things as they were before the present chaos developed? No, that would indeed be reactionary, because it would be a return to the very conditions which created the chaos; just as it would have been reactionary to have tried to go back behind the French Revolution to the material and spiritual organization of the eighteenth century,



to the very conditions which had brought about the revolution. "The old worn-out world to which we can never go back is precisely the world of modern history." There must be no reaction, but rather a rediscovery of the eternal values. We have to learn afresh the truth which modern conditions are hammering into our minds: *where there is no God there is no man*. Perhaps it will be only in the darkness that we shall learn the meaning of this. For "night is no less wonderful than day: it is equally the work of God: it is lit by the splendour of the stars and it reveals to us things that the day does not know."

Christopher Dawson's view is in a sense simpler, and perhaps more immediately acceptable. He agrees that the mechanical age has almost exhausted its possibilities, and points out that there are moments in history when the whole spirit of civilization has changed with startling rapidity, when the stream of history seems to change its course and flow in a new direction. Sixteen hundred years ago, when the ancient world became Christian, was such a moment. In the sixteenth century the Renaissance and the Reformation brought the mediaeval world to an end. To-day

another great change is in process, and the real significance of it is that all the tendencies characteristic of the last four hundred years are passing away. Materialism, rationalism, secularism, are the culminating expression of these tendencies, and the new age will see a sharp reaction from them; because they have demonstrated their futility and we are beginning to discover that mind and spirit must be reinstated in power.

Those whose belief is in a Golden Age in the past have, as the Dean of Wells has pointed out, a definite advantage over those whose hopes are in the future, in that their faith can never be disappointed by the course of events. Nevertheless the study of history would indeed be vain if we could not learn something from it as to how things shape themselves. There is cogency in Mr. Dawson's argument, and to a certain extent it is supported by what is actually happening in the world. It takes a long time—at least a generation—for the ideas of scientists and philosophers to become part of the normal thinking of the ordinary man. Though materialism still dominates common practice, materialism as a philosophy is dead. However far some of the leading thinkers of to-day may be from accepting

Christianity, they are pressing more and more strongly for a recovery of spiritual values. The lop-sidedness of modern civilization is causing grave concern both to professors and to practical men. "The command of nature has fallen into man's hand before he knows how to command himself," is a plain statement which would be endorsed by many as well as by those whose chief concern is the furtherance of religion. Not all of them would go so far as to agree with Professor McDougall in his assertion "that every step of progress physical science may make in the near future can only add to our dangers and perplexities: for every step of such progress must increase the top-heaviness and the lop-sidedness which are the radical faults of our civilization"; but when he goes on to plead that only a shift of emphasis from the mechanical to the biological sciences can save us, meaning by "biological sciences" those which are concerned with life itself, physical, mental and spiritual, as distinct from those which are engaged in research concerning the mere appurtenances of life, he is expressing a sense of revolt, now rapidly strengthening, against the general acceptance of the mechanistic standard of values.

There is among thinking people a growing realization that the prime need of mankind is the recovery by the soul of man of a power of control over his own manifold activities: a capacity to direct those currents of change on which he seems now to be floating without apparent concern for whither he is drifting, or ability to stem the tide when he knows full well that it is carrying him far out of his course. That is what we need; but how are we to begin this process of recovery? There are those who maintain that the "decline of the west" has already proceeded so far that the European mind is incapable of adopting any constructive concerted programme at all, having no longer any deep convictions about anything. We shall just go on drifting because the ordinary man is content to assume that things will turn out all right in the end, and in the meantime he is getting more satisfaction out of life than his forefathers did. Such pessimism is itself a symptom of decay, and is at all costs to be resisted. But that the tide will not turn by itself is also to be remembered. There is no incapable reason why it should turn at all, apart from human desire and human will. The hope is in the fact that men are beginning

afresh to realize their essential need for a spiritual foundation for life.

One important factor which is hastening this realization is the sense of insecurity which is very present to the minds of some of the most intelligent of young people. This is indeed the most striking difference between their outlook and that of the young people of thirty or forty years ago. There are any number of lesser differences, but the principal one is this: that a generation ago the young man or woman looked forward to life without any question as to what the general progress of events was likely to be; whereas to-day the one thing certain is that no one knows with certainty what is going to happen.

In the heyday of England's industrial prosperity and imperial expansion the world looked "safe for democracy" and for progress in every respect. Wealth would increase as industry made further advance. Knowledge would increase, especially the kind of knowledge which was profitable. Personal liberty was comparatively unrestricted; peace seemed assured. There was no danger of revolution, and no one seriously questioned the utility and continuity of our political institutions. Social problems there were, but their urgency

was unrealized. Unemployment was a recurring misfortune, but the expansion of industry would presently absorb the workless. If wages were low, so were prices; if the taxpayer grumbled then as now, his burden was not so heavy to bear.

No doubt the sense of security was mainly illusory, but the point is that it was widespread and taken for granted by almost everybody. To-day the reverse is the case: there is no security anywhere. We do not know whether in our own country we shall succeed in vindicating the principles of ordered liberty which we call democracy, or whether totalitarianism in some form will displace it. We may hope and believe that we shall be able to show the rest of the world that democracy is not an outworn creed, but nobody knows for certain. We do not know whether the nations of Europe are going to achieve a settled peace or whether western civilization will plunge over the precipice. It must be one or the other, and that soon; but we do not know which. We do not know how developments in the Far East are going to react on conditions of life in the West. I am not suggesting that in all these vital matters the worst is going to happen. I am only

pointing out the contrast between our present uncertainty and the security which was so easily assured a generation ago.

In these circumstances the teaching of the New Testament has a relevance which was not realized in the days of apparent stability. Our times are far more akin to New Testament times than were the prosperous years of our fathers. In the words of Professor K. E. Kirk: "Then, as now, there were wars and rumours of wars; then, far more than now, life was pitifully uncertain, and the conflict with poverty and starvation was even more acute than it is to-day. The legions marched to and fro, the barbarians hammered at the frontiers; the four horsemen of the Apocalypse—Death, Plague, Famine, and the Sword—rode on their ghastly business far and wide."

That all members of the Christian Church were impervious to these fears it is impossible to believe, if only because the New Testament writers were always trying to put good heart into them and to direct their eyes to Him who reigned eternal in the heavens. But that the Church as a whole was the one body of men who had an answer to the troubled questions of the day is certain. While others sought refuge in cynicism or

stoicism or had recourse to magical rites which would protect them here and hereafter, the Christian Church had a faith which, not by magic but by the power of the spirit, lifted them into another world, made them citizens of heaven while still dwellers upon earth, and carried them triumphantly through the catastrophes which broke up the Empire and laid low the institutions in which men had vainly trusted. So when the barbarian was at the gate it was to the Church and her message that men turned, and nurtured by the Church the new civilization was born. Again and again, as successive waves of barbaric invasion broke upon the Imperial City, it was the spokesman of the Church, the representative of her spiritual power—a Leo the Great or a Gregory—who saved civilization from ruin.

What was the faith which gave them this power? It was that God Himself had dwelt among men, that He had overcome death and sin, that whatever might happen on earth in the unceasing conflict between good and evil, His will would prevail and His Kingdom would come. They that are with us are more than they that be against us. The vision of prophets and psalmists of old had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. He was the Saviour of



the World, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. No victory of evil could be permanent. The ultimate destiny of mankind is redemption. And though the saints may cry aloud sometimes, How long, O Lord, how long? God will vindicate himself to men and fulfil his purpose in the sight of all.

This faith in God as the one security in a perishing world was the basis of their faith in the eternal worth of man, redeemed by Christ Jesus. *What is Man?* is one of the ultimate questions of religion and philosophy; and the imprisonment of the soul of man in modern conditions is forcing the question upon the mind of every thinking person. It is the continuous and emphatic assertion of Christianity that it possesses the only satisfying answer to this question. Physically, man is no more than a tiny speck moving about on the surface of one of the smallest of the myriad bodies inhabiting space. Spiritually, he is akin to the Divine, made in the image of God. Man is utterly dependent upon God, but because of this very fact man has a high place and dignity, and without God he has no place at all.

The Bible view is that man's worth is his *worth to God*. God made man "in his own

image," that is, with a capacity to hold communion with Him, serve Him, and co-operate with Him, because the fellowship of man with God has value for God. Man's deep instinct to seek for God corresponds to God's continual seeking of man. The parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son, illustrate with increasing depth of emotion this truth about God. This is why sin is regarded as a positive thing, not as a mere negation of goodness. Sin alienates man from God and is the great obstacle to communion with God. This is grief to God, not only because His children have been disobedient, but because their disobedience destroys the fellowship with God for which they were created.

Over against this Bible teaching, in which the true dignity of man is inextricably combined with his need of penitence and his complete dependence upon God, is the naturalistic or humanistic belief in man as the captain of his own soul and the only possible author of his own salvation, which is now being daily discredited. So long ago as Professor James's famous Gifford Lectures, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, he spoke of this as a "new sort of religion of nature, which

has entirely displaced Christianity from the thought of a large part of our generation." Since then there have been the war, and the years of twilight which we call peace, and there is not much room for complacency regarding mankind's capacity to save itself. But somehow the belief in our inevitable progress survives and a non-theistic humanism is the faith of many. But where is there any ground of hope of a redemption of the world from evil and a cosmic victory of righteousness except in belief in God? The nobler the conception of morality held by humanism, the less can it dispense with the grace of God for its achievement.

This Bible teaching accords with all the deepest human experience. In the individual life, the experience of men is that permanent satisfaction is only to be found when the spirit is supreme. The divided self cannot be satisfied. The satisfactions obtained when the desires of the flesh or the instincts of acquisition are in control are trivial and transitory. The whole man is fulfilled only as the soul of man is master. As in the individual life, so in the common life of men. The root cause of our unrest is that the spirit of man is depressed. It is neither master nor servant; it

is, in our most absorbing enterprises, left out of account. The uprising of the soul of man which is our ultimate need can only come through a renewed faith in God and a definite turning of the will and conscience towards God. The unifying claim of Christ the King, the Son of God, is the only true answer to the claims of the secular order, whether those claims are the explicit claims of the secular state or the implicit claims of the material conditions of life. The Christian who fully admits Christ's claim to rule is himself a unified person, who by the grace of God has resolved the disharmony and contradiction between the life of the spirit and the life of the body. It is only as the nation as a whole admits this claim that it can achieve integrity of purpose.

## SECTION II

WHAT ARE THE CHURCHES FOR?

## WHAT ARE THE CHURCHES FOR?

THERE is no religious question which more frequently crops up in these days than that of the true function of the Churches in the midst of our distracted and chaotic world. Put in its simplest terms, the question is this: is it their prime concern to convert individual souls to Christ, or to inspire public and corporate action which will lead to a better world in which Christian principles will govern the affairs of men?

The question continually recurs because it is an important question, and because opinion upon it is sharply divided, both within the Churches and outside. In the average intelligent congregation there are sure to be those who object strongly to the treatment of public questions in the pulpit, and others who think their minister has lost all sense of proportion if he deals continually with the moral and spiritual problems of the individual life while the whole world of men and nations is moving rapidly towards its doom. Outside the Churches

there are those who are constantly reproaching them for not "giving a lead" on important moral issues confronting the world to-day, and others who equally warmly tell the Churches to mind their own business if their spokesmen intrude on questions of politics or economics.

There is much to be said on either side. Dr. Buchman, founder of the Group Movement, puts one side cogently when he says:

"National and world problems remain the same because the root problem—human nature—remains unsolved. Three thousand miles of ocean do not change this fundamental problem, and will not save us if we fail to solve it. The symptoms may differ in Europe and America. The disease is the same. What is the disease? Isn't it fear, dishonesty, resentment, selfishness? We talk about freedom and liberty, but we are slaves to ourselves. There are only two possible alternatives to-day: collapse or God-control, and collapse is simply the selfishness of all of us together. Any lasting social and economic recovery can only be built on the foundation of a moral and a spiritual recovery. When you and I are not one hundred per cent God-guided and God-controlled we are really helping chaos. All lukewarm people are really helping chaos."

Again, Sir Josiah Stamp, in his book *Motive and Method in a Christian Order*, says:

“I am old-fashioned enough to believe that the value of Christianity consists in the case of a single man raised from sin to conquest, from feebleness to moral strength, from meanness to beauty, rather than in a ‘clear programme’ of action for unemployment or exchange control. I am also old-fashioned enough to believe that, however well the world evolves, there will always be new problems created by human relationships, for which Christianity at any given moment will have no ‘clear programme,’ but I do not think Christianity will therefore be a perpetual failure.”

Now it cannot be said that either Dr. Buchman or Sir Josiah Stamp is indifferent to the great question of the application of Christian principles to the affairs of men. Sir Josiah Stamp's book is in fact a discussion of this question; and Dr. Buchman declares himself to be intent on nothing less than the prevention of the violence and destruction towards which the nations are moving. But he believes that this can only be accomplished by persuading individuals “on a national scale” to surrender themselves one by one to God-control. There is at least this certain truth in his point of view:



that Christian principles can never really be "applied" at all. Application means external imposition, as in the application of colour-wash to a wall. Christian principles can never be so applied. They will only be the guiding principles in national and international affairs when public men, and the public opinion behind public men, are inwardly convinced of their truth and their relevance; and this means conversion from materialistic to religious standards of value, conversion from trust in mammon to trust in God.

Further, it may be urged that this insistence on the importance of the individual is both an essential element in Christianity, and a most timely protest in an age when the whole trend of politics and economics is to suppress him. It is not only in totalitarian States that the tendency is to regard the individual as only an infinitesimal and transitory element in the social organization, who must subordinate his own interest and his very existence to this organism. Even in democratic countries the balance is being very precariously held between the rights of the individual and the claims of the State to coerce him. The individual counts for less to-day everywhere than he did a century ago. Liberalism is under a heavy

cloud. Hardly anywhere except in religion are the inalienable rights of the individual soul recognized, and it is of the utmost importance for Christianity in modern life that it should jealously guard these rights and its own recognition of them. There must be no attempt to compel professing Christians to think alike, no assumption that they ought to think alike, on questions where individual liberty of opinion or conscience is entirely right and proper. As Mr. Roger Lloyd says, it is the Christian doctrine of man which is the one remaining hope of the individual citizen in all nations, if his right to be a person, and not a mere pawn, is to be restored to him.

On the other hand, it must be said with some emphasis that the "individual" interpretation of the Gospel which results in large numbers of Christian people complacently ignoring their grave responsibility in regard to the present condition of the world has a great deal to answer for. The ineffectiveness of the Christian Church in its influence on practical affairs, both national and international, is largely due to the preoccupation of Christian people with their own individual concerns, and their failure to achieve any width of vision: a preoccupation which is none the less selfish because their own

personal ideals are worthy ones. The control of a quick temper, the conquest of envy, resentment, or some other besetting sin, are admirable objectives. The world would be a happier place if everybody by the grace of God learned to control their tempers. Resentment and selfishness are, as Dr. Buchman says, part of the disease from which the nations are suffering. But what is lacking is the nexus between the operation of the grace of God in overcoming individual faults and the Pentecostal vision of a world won for Christ, not only by the activities of Christian missions, but also by the concerted and determined effort to bring the spirit and principles of Christianity into the actual concerns of men.

What in fact are the true functions of the Churches in the community? What are the Churches for?

This may seem an elementary question, as indeed it is. But it may be doubted whether there would be unanimity among Church members in answering it. It is because our minds are not clear on this question that we differ about so much else.

First, the Church—and by the Church I mean, in this discussion, all Christian denominations—exists in order to minister in

spiritual things to those people who belong to it. Members of the Church, with any degree of loyalty to their own obligations, are entitled to expect opportunities for public worship and prayer, the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, the provision of such help as they may need in the maintenance and enrichment of their own spiritual life. The first duty of the appointed ministers of the Church is to try to meet these needs. This they do, with more or less diligence and competence, both publicly and privately. I make bold to claim that the great majority of the ministers of all denominations are devoted and sincere in their efforts to provide what their people require in these ways; though naturally, some of them can do it better than others can. None of them does it as well as he wants to. And here and there are some who have almost given up trying. When this happens, it will generally be found that the man has been bearing a heavy burden for a long time without much encouragement, and his will or faith has given way under the strain.

Up and down the country this ministry of the Church to its own members is continually going on. And it is worth remarking that nobody can possibly know the value of it who

is himself outside its reach. Very often the man who has fault to find has no personal experience on which to form a sound judgment. Or, it may be, he has at some time been disappointed : his own needs have not been met as he would wish them to have been or thinks they ought to have been, and so he makes a general criticism or even condemnation of the whole. I feel bound to say that in my observation in many different places in town and country the pastoral work of the Church in its ministry to its own people is at a high standard of devotion and endeavour, and at a quite reasonably high standard of efficiency.

The case is different when we come to consider the second function of the Church, namely, its commission to carry out the message of the Gospel beyond its own borders to people who do not belong to it, or whose allegiance is of the most nominal kind. This we speak of as the evangelistic work of the Church, as distinct from its pastoral work. One cannot claim that this is being efficiently carried out except in rare instances to-day. There are, of course, special efforts from time to time, parochial missions, united missions, and the like. There are campaigns and crusades. As things are these special efforts are a sheer necessity : and when

one is undertaken it ought to have behind it the earnest support of all Church members; because the campaign is an attempt to make good in a great special effort the deficiencies of evangelistic work in our normal parochial activities. For this deficiency there are obvious reasons. One is the much reduced number of ministers of religion at work in the industrial areas. Another is the fact that there is too large a proportion of professing Church members who expect to be continually "looked up" by these overworked ministers, and make demands, not for a truly spiritual ministry, but for a sort of continual canvassing. The truth is that steady evangelistic work as a normal activity in parochial and congregational life will only come into its own when it is done in large part by the laity. The need for it at the present time is great.

The third function of the Church, besides the pastoral and the evangelistic, is what may be called "social work," though the term is not sufficiently accurate. I use it in the sense of the total effect of the Church's work and worship upon the whole tone and character of the life of the community. The Church is concerned to further the application of Christian principles to every phase of our common life. Indirectly,

it has done a great deal in this direction. Individual Christians, imbued with the spirit of Christ, and full of love for the outcast and oppressed, have been the pioneers in every kind of social reform. Sometimes they have done this without the support, or even in face of the opposition, of their fellow-Christians, who ought to have been backing them up. But their inspiration has nevertheless come from Christianity and their own convictions as to what it should mean in regard to men's relations with one another. There is a certain mission church which has recently celebrated its jubilee. A booklet has been issued, telling the story of the district in the past fifty years, and contrasting the conditions in which men and women and children live there to-day with the conditions half a century ago. The writer is not drawing upon his imagination or entirely upon his memory. He quotes from the newspapers of the earlier days descriptions of an environment so sordid as almost to be incredible. Not that the district is now a paradise: far from it. But it is amazingly different from what it was a generation ago. To bring about this change there has been active co-operation between the civic authorities, the schools, and the workers, clergy, and laity at the mission church; and

again and again the initiative and the stimulus have come from the mission.

The influence of this mission illustrates the value of the social work of the Church in a particular locality. There remains the larger question—the impact of the Christian Church upon world affairs.

The Recall to Religion will fail of its purpose if it does not result in a realization by Christian people generally, as already a small though growing proportion do realize, of their responsibility for bringing Christian principles into direct relation with the social problems of to-day, both national and international. All these problems have their moral aspect, and some of them are by their very nature fundamentally moral problems. National problems like Housing and Unemployment, international problems such as those involved in the relations between civilized and backward peoples, between East and West, between the nations within the European tradition, are ultimately human problems, and therefore spiritual.

It may be a debatable point whether the spokesmen of the Church should frequently issue pronouncements on these issues. What is not debatable is that Christian people should *think of them in a Christian way*. They may not



agree in their opinions even if they do try to think in a Christian way. But our weakness at the moment is that the whole outlook and manner of thought of many Christians on some of these issues is no more Christian than that of those who make no special claim to be Christian, who frankly view all these questions from a secular standpoint. Twentieth-century civilization appears to have reached a paradoxical cul-de-sac, and there is no way out except by a return to Christian principles, without which our civilization is doomed.

Canon F. R. Barry<sup>1</sup> states in impressive words what is the great task of the Church in the world to-day:

“That the Church should cover the earth’s surface with an organization of Christians is not enough. Its task is to redeem the world’s life. . . . It must be ambitious to reclaim those great tracts of secular civilization which are still unredeemed territory, yet to be won back into the Kingdom of God. It will study not only to make more Christians, but so to christen their day-by-day activities in their secular groupings and associations—whether social, political or economic—that men may come ‘to recognize Christ as the true centre of their fellowship.’ ”

<sup>1</sup> *The Relevance of the Church*, p. 228.

Surely there can be no possible exaggeration of the responsibility of professing Christians if this task is to be seriously attempted. The Church of Christ stands for spiritual values in a world becoming increasingly secular. *Nominal* Church membership is worse than useless. To make the Church *strong* is the obvious first step. Half-hearted Christianity is not going to save the world. A higher standard of loyalty to the worship, witness, and work of the Church on the part of all its members is an essential prerequisite of our being fit to be used as agents of the Holy Spirit for the world's redemption. While statesmen discuss and economists argue, the powers of the world-to-come are waiting to be allowed entrance to men's hearts—

“Other spirits there are standing apart  
Upon the forehead of the age to come:  
These, these will give the world another heart,  
And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum of  
mighty workings?  
Listen awhile, ye nations, and be dumb.”

# SECTION III

WHAT THEN DO WE NEED?

## IN THE PARISH: EVANGELISM

IN the last chapter, "What are the Churches For?", I said that the evangelistic work of the Church is the one essential function which is being least adequately performed. There is no dispute about this: the call to evangelism which is being sounded to-day both in the Church of England and in the Free Churches is evidence of a general recognition that much more must be done than is being done at present. As I have been turning over in my mind what the response in the parishes to the Archbishop's Appeal must mean in practice, I have more and more clearly realized that it means evangelism. But evangelism is a wide term, and methods of evangelism vary. Therefore by "evangelism" I do not mean one particular way of trying to reach the people, and I am sure it is dangerous to suppose that what is found effective in one parish or district is necessarily the right method for all. What is important is that every Christian congregation should realize afresh its unescapable responsi-

bility for a definite and continuous effort both to deepen the spiritual life of its members (which is a necessary part of evangelism) and also to carry the message of the Gospel to those who are outside.

Even though we recognize that the immediate need is urgent, it is a mistake to begin by taking a pessimistic view of the situation. The assumption that the Church is completely failing to reach the people is a false foundation on which to build; because it rests upon certain mistakes which it is important to avoid.

Let us beware, in the first place, of the tendency to attach too much importance to statistics. If I may give a personal illustration, I took part for some years in a continuous effort by the local clergy to reach the crowds of men who gathered in a certain market-place on Sundays, both morning and evening. They came to hear various speakers, mainly political, who addressed them from lorries disposed here and there round the market square. The Church of England hired a lorry and took its place amongst the rest. It was exacting work, for any speaker had to hold his audience against the competition of the other, perhaps more lively, speakers on other lorries. There were plenty of questions and heckling of everybody. It was,

in fact, a kind of local Hyde Park. We went on with this for some years, and though very few of the hundreds, probably thousands, of men who came within sound of our voices declared themselves converted or joined any Christian congregation, we never had any doubt that the effort was worth while. The testimony of the police would have removed any such doubts had they arisen.

The Church exists not only to increase its own numbers, or even to intensify the life within itself, but to disseminate the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven in men's relationships with one another both within the Church and outside it. The Church is not in itself the Kingdom of God. It is the instrument for the Kingdom's expansion. And that expansion is not to be measured merely by the growth of the Church as a society, but also by the extent to which the truths of the Kingdom are applied to the various spheres of human activity. There is a tendency to think of the movements which are now developing outside the Church as though these movements were rivals to the Church, and their progress a reflection upon the Church's indolence. But surely this is not the true way of looking at it. In so far as these movements are based upon the principles of the

Kingdom, principles of justice and mercy, goodness, and truth, they are in themselves evidence of the extent to which the Church has succeeded in leavening the whole of society. Indeed one may go further and say that the very criticism to which the Church to-day is subject is evidence of the same thing. The most cogent criticism of the Church by the outsider is that the Church is not Christian enough. Whatever truth there may be in this, it means a great advance in the hold which Christian principles have upon the popular mind that the criticism of the Church should take this form.

Let us beware also of attaching undue importance to the special as compared with the normal. Evangelism does not necessarily mean a series of "special efforts." There is of course a place and a need for special efforts, and there are men (and women) with special gifts for evangelism who ought to be used to the utmost in missions and crusades. But what we chiefly need is a fresh grasp of the principle that the preaching of the Gospel is a prime duty of the Church in its normal activities, and that without it nothing else that we may do will have the distinctive Christian note. The regular

preaching in the Churches has definitely declined in effectiveness because the idea has grown up that the special preacher, the special mission, the spasmodic special effort of one kind or another, is more important than the normal ministry. In the Church of England there are parish priests suffering discouragement because they think that their day by day, week by week, ministry is regarded by those in authority as of less interest and less importance than "stunts" of various kinds. Yet in fact there is no more important evangelistic work being done than such parts of this regular ministry as include the careful teaching and training of Confirmation candidates and young communicants.

Dr. Scott Lidgett wrote an article in *The Times* soon after the reunion of Methodism, which has a message not only for Methodism but for all the Churches. "Original Methodism," he said, "combined the inwardness of personal religion, an intimacy of spiritual fellowship between those who enjoyed it, and an evangelistic activity, in a way which has perhaps never been approached save by the Franciscan Movement in the days of its earliest and unfettered enthusiasm. World Methodism as existing to-day owes everything to this three-



fold combination. . . . This work of evangelization eventually aroused all the Churches, transformed the living theology of them all, raised the moral standards of the community, and initiated all kinds of social reform." He goes on to say that the great misfortune was that the movement which did so much was not able to save itself from internal disunion. But that reproach has now been rolled away, and the Methodist Church will once more be able "to concentrate its strength upon the original task of proclaiming the Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus throughout the world, and of seeking to apply the principles of the Gospel to all the pressing needs of our modern life." This means that the effectiveness of Methodism depends upon the recognition of evangelism as the basis of all its other activities. Only as the Gospel is faithfully preached in the normal life and work of the Church can it be vitally related to the manifold interests and affairs of men.

Nevertheless, special needs call for special efforts, and this is a time of special need. Evangelistic Missions, Crusades such as have been conducted by the Industrial Christian Fellowship, open-air preaching in the parishes,

an organized extension of personal witness by house-to-house visitation by clergy and laity—there is a necessary place for all these. Some parishes or churches have had missions at regular intervals. Others have not had a mission for as long as anyone can remember. An idea was abroad a few years ago that the day of parochial missions was over. I am sure that is a mistake. Missions have changed their character a good deal, and we have learned that a preaching mission unaccompanied by definite teaching is not very lasting in its effects. Some have gone to the extreme of cutting out the preaching altogether and having only “teaching missions.” These have their place, no doubt, especially as a sequel to a mission in which preaching and teaching are combined. But to rely on “teaching missions” alone as a means of reaching the outsider is, I feel sure, mistaken policy.

Teaching has no power of itself either to persuade men to listen to it, or to move men to accept it. Preaching is distinct from teaching in that it is addressed ultimately to the *will*, and does not hesitate to try to reach the will through the emotions; though a preacher who knows what he is doing is well aware that if the appeal is only to the emotions and does not

reach the will, it is worse than useless. Many modern sermons in which the teaching element has completely ousted preaching in its traditional sense are like lectures on physic delivered to sick people. The substance of the lecture is true, and the truth is of great importance. But a lecture on physic has no healing properties. It is worth while to stress this, because one reason for our failure in evangelism is the present disparagement of preaching, for unless a man called to the preaching office is convinced of the value and importance of preaching he will never be an effective preacher. If a preacher were to keep the word MESSAGE always before him in preparing or delivering a sermon it would save himself and his hearers from much futility and irrelevance. And if another keyword, WITNESS, were also present to his mind, it would save him from the unconvincing utterance of things he has learned as orthodox but has never experienced as true.

Just one more word about missions: it is not within the scope of this little book to go into details as to the organization of such special efforts, on which an abundance of helpful material is available. But it is worth while, perhaps, to say that the experience of all

missioners would seem to prove that, though no mission sincerely undertaken and carried through is without result, even visible result, yet the depth and extent of its effect is dependent, more than upon any other human factor, upon the carefulness of the preparation. A mission is not normally to be undertaken at a few weeks' notice. Some months of spiritual preparation are really necessary.

Secondly, and equally important, the "follow-up" of the mission must be carefully thought out and conscientiously carried through.

What I have said about preaching, both in the normal life of a church and in special missions, brings us face to face with the question: What are we to preach? An elementary question, of course; but not unnecessary, because of the extreme vagueness of much of what is taught and believed to-day. An urgent necessity is the recovery of a definite faith in the fundamentals of Christianity as against the vague sentimentalism now popular. The idea that "it doesn't matter what a man believes so long as he does right," is very widely held. Its complete devaluation of truth explains why tolerance and broad-mindedness are the virtues supremely regarded. Truth

doesn't matter. It seems to set a high value on conduct, but the conception of conduct is as a rule limited to the kindlier virtues. "Not to have done any harm to anybody" is the passport to eternal bliss, openly expressed by the dear, good people who, in comparative poverty, live in close juxtaposition with their neighbours, and more secretly held as the ground of hope that all will be well hereafter by those more opulent people who go a long way in self-indulgence while covering a multitude of sins by a somewhat demonstrative charity.

Amongst certain people, some of them men of distinction, who do more thinking than either of these types, religious ideas are in such confusion as to have lost all practical value. Its positive content has slowly dissolved into nothing more than personal preferences, with a consequent chaos in the realm of morals. There is no way out of this confusion except by a recovery of positive faith in a Personal God, which involves a recovery of a positive belief in man as a free spiritual being. This is not to make the foolish demand that modern theology should ignore the whole trend of modern thought. As Dean Matthews says, "perhaps no intelligent Christian is blind enough to suppose that the intellectual and

moral crisis has left his religion untouched and that he can sit untroubled in a peacefully riding ark while he contemplates less fortunate persons battling with the waves." The way out is not simply the way back, nor can theology simply stand still. The task of theology in every age is to relate the revelation given in Christ to the way in which men's minds are moving. Otherwise the faith can never be commended to them, or effectively related to their temporal and eternal welfare. Yet if theology makes too great haste to accommodate itself to modern tendencies of thought it may presently have no distinctive Gospel to preach.

But it is as possible as it is necessary to hold fast by a positive faith without denying that its application is relative to changing conditions. The Archbishop of York, in his lectures at Harvard,<sup>1</sup> after fully admitting, indeed asserting, that theology has much to learn from the characteristics of modern thought, went on to say:

"For myself I do not believe that that kind of vaguely spiritual interpretation of the world, which does not find its centre in a fully personal and transcendent God, has any hope of

<sup>1</sup> *The Church and Its Teaching To-day*, p. 43.

surviving under the pressures of modern knowledge and thought in the direction of agnosticism. I believe that the one kind of spiritual interpretation that can survive is that which insists with the Bible that 'the Lord sitteth above the waterflood and remaineth a king forever'; and that no survey of ordinary human experience will be of itself in the least degree adequate to disclose Him to us, but that none the less, He may be known by us because He has taken action to reveal His nature.

"I believe, in other words, that Lord Balfour was right when he insisted that the only kind of faith which is of real value is faith in a God who takes sides, not only a God who is on the whole more on the one side or the other, but who Himself takes sides by active choice, who has a purpose and is perpetually active in the world for the fulfilment of that purpose.

"In other words, I am persuaded that the central problem of religion to-day is the problem of divine revelation. Has God acted with the deliberate purpose of making Himself known and with the effect of making Himself known to those whose minds and spirits were ready to receive His manifestation? That I believe to be the crucial point."

The recovery of an objective belief in God, as Real, Personal, and Active; in Jesus Christ

His Only Son our Lord, by Whose death and resurrection there is redemption for sinning, suffering mankind; in the Holy Spirit by Whom He becomes immanent in the visible world and especially in the souls of men: this is the first pre-requisite of any effective appeal for a deeper sense of loyalty to Christ and to His Church.

If this positive Gospel is to be presented to this generation with any hope that they will accept it, it must be expressed in language which they can understand, and related to the situation which now is. To a great many preachers to-day this is a great difficulty and sometimes an insuperable obstacle, because their presuppositions are so entirely different from those of the people they want to reach. Many preachers of the Gospel have been brought up from infancy to imbibe the spiritual heritage of ideas from which our secularized education has completely divorced the most intelligent of the younger generation. Others have had a professionalized training which separates them intellectually from their own contemporaries. As the Rev. Max Warren, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, says:

“The evangelistic technique of many preachers is based on a tradition which worked



splendidly when the preacher could reckon on the whole of his audience having some familiarity with the Scriptures. To the younger generation at any rate, that presentation—not necessarily that theology—is repugnant, in the sense that it is bewildering. This demands from those who would preach the Gospel that they shall think out fresh metaphors, fresh ways of presenting the everlasting Gospel. Each man must do this for himself.”

That last sentence, “Each man must do this for himself,” comes as rather a shock. Some men will never be able to do it, with the best efforts of which they are capable. If the training of the clergy is to be made more thorough, as is much to be desired, the plan and scope of it must be so devised as not to increase the gulf which separates them from their fellows, but to help them to bridge it. Whereas a doctor can cure a patient without the patient understanding the process of the cure, the case is very different with the preacher or the priest. A doctor can never have too much technical skill. Neither can a priest, if it is the right technique. But a training made more technical, in the sense of more professional, would do more harm than good.

Meanwhile, the attempt to present the Gospel in terms which can be easily understood too

often results in helpful Sunday afternoon or evening chats about nothing very particular. Miss Stevie Smith, in an entertaining work called *Novel on Yellow Paper*, may be speaking for a good many of her contemporaries when she makes an emphatic protest against all that kind of thing. The Church seems much too ready to accommodate itself to people who are "bone lazy about using their brains, but good enough at it if they're interested"; much too ready to say: It is our fault, so "we will cut out doctrine, and step down among the people, and not preach at all, but just have a good heart-to-heart talk, just ordinary men among men, just a helpful chat Sunday evenings, just not clever at all, but simple as a b c. . . . Was St. Paul simply having Sunday evening chats not-a-bit-clever? Not he." So let the Church stop being affable and simple and very kind, and let it be very deep and ingenious. "Well, look then, they might try this. It certainly would be a change!"

Miss Smith's style may be flippant, but her intention is serious. She is a "modern," anything but a reactionary, and her whole book shows her to be keenly observant and highly intelligent. What she says is worth paying attention to. The message of the Church to the

world to-day must be positive and distinctive or it is no use at all. It must also be adapted to the needs of to-day. To quote Dean Matthews again:

“If the Christian religion is just a tradition of the elders, then the main purpose of the Church should be to repeat unchanged the time-honoured formulas and customs. But if the Church is indwelt by the living Christ we shall expect it to find new words for the new age: its eyes turned to the future rather than the past. We must pray that the Church may realize the power of the Resurrection; truly believe that the Spirit which is in it is stronger than all the forces of the world, and, casting aside the grave-clothes of dead controversies, come forth with the message of salvation to the modern world.”

One particularly important part of evangelistic work must have special mention, and that is the effort to reach young people, and to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ effectively to bear upon their lives. It is not too much to say that the future of organized religion in this country depends upon this. It may be said that the Church is well aware of the urgency of the problem. Many Anglican dioceses have established a “Board of Youth,” and most churches

are making some definite attempt to reach young people, and to discover new ways of doing so.

In the past the Churches were content to rely upon somewhat loosely organized Sunday schools as their main approach to boys and girls, supplemented by admirable organizations like the Church Lads' Brigade, or the Boys' Brigade, and the Girls' Friendly Society, which appealed to certain sections or groups of young people, together with football and cricket clubs and other recreational attractions. The whole business was haphazard to some degree, and not always directed by any intelligent appreciation of the problems which had to be solved. But the problems have since become more obvious, if not more acute. The difficulties of making an effective approach to young people of all classes are much greater than they were, and something has had to be done about it. Now the Church can claim to be making an intelligent and devoted effort to bring religion into the lives of boys and girls, not merely as a matter of attendance at church or Sunday school, but as a living force in daily life. We are still a long way from success, so far as the great majority of young people is concerned, but we are definitely making progress; and it is no

longer to be assumed as a matter of course that the youths of the present generation are staying away from church and taking no notice of religion. The fact is that in the churches with the largest congregations there is to be found the largest proportion of people under twenty-five. The churches that are dead or moribund do not attract young people, because they do not attract anybody. But the vigorous churches, with live congregations, have as many young people attending them as they ever had.

It is possible, indeed, to make too sharp a distinction, in this country at least, between "youth" and the rest of the population, and many intelligent young people dislike this specialized treatment. So far as I understand what is happening abroad, youth is not nearly so self-conscious in England as it is in Italy or in Germany, or in India, or in China. In those countries the "youth-movements" have a strong political colouring, and the stimulation of the self-consciousness of youth has been an effective means of political propaganda. In large areas in the East nationalism has practically become a substitute for religion amongst young people, even from the age of twelve. In Norway and Sweden, on the other hand, and in England, there are no mass movements of youth com-

parable with either the Eastern nations or those European countries where youth has been urged to realize itself. This is not, of course, to say that there have not been great changes in the last twenty years; but then there have been great changes in everybody's outlook, except of those who pride themselves on never changing their minds about anything. I think it was Professor Raven who pointed out that the Church's failure to present the Gospel effectively to the young is no new thing, and that the causes of our failure now 'are not very different from the causes of our failure twenty years ago.

Nevertheless, the youth of any generation, and not least of this, does require in some measure special treatment. There must be special organization for them suitable to their years and interests. They must have their own clubs and societies. Moreover, there must be some differentiation between those whose education has been more than that of an elementary school and the growing number who have had secondary school teaching and environment. The problem of youth is not one problem, but many problems. But ultimately, I suppose, in all classes and at all stages of education, the root problem is to find an effective way of dealing with a generation which desires to live its life

with zest, which combines a stout assertion of personal freedom with a strong group tendency, which at times calls loudly for leadership, yet seems strangely reluctant to be led, which is fascinated by the marvels of modern applied science but has moments when it craves for more spiritual satisfactions, which has a great capacity for adventure but has to be persuaded to make the great venture of faith. Sympathy and patience and a respectful understanding of this complex mentality are assuredly needed if the situation is to be wisely handled.

The old organizations still have their place, and where rightly used are of great value. But other means have also to be employed. "Fellowships" on a broad basis, with a good deal of the control in the hands of the young people themselves, are attractive to those in their later 'teens and early twenties. A single fellowship may have very varied activities, having under its wing study groups, discussions and debates, social activities, service groups, and devotional guilds and classes. The union of these under one fellowship prevents the clear separation between these different interests which has often hindered any real cohesion among the young people of a parish or congregation.

This method also helps to solve one of the major problems in dealing with young people, namely, the fostering of a real fellowship spirit and at the same time encouraging the developments of individual personality. There has been recently a certain amount of criticism, some of it much exaggerated, of all clubs, brigades, guilds, and the like as being repressive of individuality, and the question is seriously asked whether moral education and the influence of religion ought to aim at the repression of the individualistic tendencies of the growing girl or youth, such tendencies being assumed to be anti-social, or, conversely, are they to encourage the development and expression of personality at the risk of occasional serious failure or moral collapse? Adolescence is, in one aspect, the breaking away of the individual from the pack or herd, a revolt sometimes accompanied by shyness or moroseness or by more positive anti-social tendencies. Is he to be dragooned back into the pack, by means of clubs and brigades, or is the youth to be encouraged to be an individual? The question is asked more insistently because of what is happening in Germany and Italy.

This criticism is, as I have said, often exaggerated and ill-informed. But it calls



attention to a real problem. Experience has convinced me that it can be solved within the organizations which the critics condemn. Such organizations are necessary. They help young people to realize that they are not alone in the world (and loneliness can be terribly oppressive to an adolescent), they encourage a sense of social responsibility, they give opportunities for leadership and initiative, they arouse keenness in some who have hitherto been undisciplined and slack; and unless one begins by condemning the team spirit altogether, preferring to allow our young people to roam round restlessly seeking outlets for a personality which is as yet undeveloped, there is no ground for serious criticism of these organizations as mere instruments of dragooning. Attractive as the German idea may be to those who would like to see the youth of England turned into ardent nationalistic "patriots," there is no danger of the actual leaders of our youth organizations being diverted along that road. Nor will there be, so long as they keep in the forefront the avowed object to which they have set themselves—the well-being of the young people themselves, and their development in body, mind, and spirit.

The great need of the moment is to help and

encourage young people to commit themselves, in this distracted world, to Christ and His Church. The spirit of loyalty must be invoked. Loyalty to the Divine Leader, steadfast devotion to His service, resolution so to live that His Kingdom may be brought nearer to fulfilment—these are fixed points by which youth must be helped to steer his ship on an ocean of many conflicting currents. Though the difficulties are great and there are many disappointments, the fine spirit of many young people to-day can be directed and developed along lines of Christian service, and there is much encouragement to be found in work for them and with them. The success of the new effort of evangelism in the Church will be much aided by their willing co-operation.

IN THE INDIVIDUAL: PRAYER AND  
WORSHIP; SERVICE

IN the course of our discussion so far, I have more than once laid stress on the importance of the individual, and, when all is said, it remains true that the response to the Archbishop's Appeal depends on its reaching the heart and conscience of individuals. It is to the individual business man, working man, professional man, to the individual woman, in the home, in society, or active in the affairs of life, to the growing youth or girl just coming to realize the possible meaning of life, it is to all these that the appeal is made.

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our  
powers."

The business of the day must go on; the stresses and strains inseparable from the practical things of life, in these anxious days, must still be borne. But the call comes to each one not to allow himself to be carried hither and thither, seeking rest and finding none, but to

seek it where it may be found, to recover the secret of the Lord.

Some years ago, when I was preaching a mission in Edinburgh, I met there a Yorkshireman, a keen worker in the Church, who said to me, "Christian people to-day seem to lack something, but what it is I cannot tell. Some day, no doubt, it will come and we shall be full of what at present we don't possess. We shall have new vigour, new hope, new joy, for we shall have recovered the secret." This conversation has lingered in my memory, and I thought of it again when reading the other day in that rich book, Baron von Hügel's *Letters*. "The warm flow of deep unaffected piety," as Abbot Butler described it, pulsates through every page. There was a man, one feels, who possessed the secret of the Lord. But then he was a great intellect as well as a great soul; and some might think that it was his intellectual grasp of religion which made all the difference. Von Hügel himself would never have agreed that that was so. Highly as he valued intellectual gifts, he knew that it was not by the intellect that the secret of the Lord is apprehended. When he gave evidence before a committee appointed to enquire into the condition of religion in

the army (1917) he referred to a certain workman from the Potteries as one who understood the essential thing in religion; and he went on to say that that workman had been won to religion by the same influence that had won himself half a century before; he had had the privilege to come across people who had impressed him with the reality of worlds undreamed of, and taught him that the richness of religion is such that words can never express it nor any formula contain it. Religion is a seeing of the invisible. It is a hidden experience. It is something deep down in the heart of a man, which, if he possesses, he cannot describe to you. It is in a real sense a secret: a secret of the Lord which is with them that fear Him. It is incommunicable in words, but it may be communicated in the life. The life which is inspired by it has a certain quality which men recognize even if they cannot define.

There is a story of that beautiful pillar in Roslin Chapel, which is pointed out to every visitor as the 'Prentice Pillar. The master-carver had a pupil to whom he tried to convey the secret of the craft, and he was an apt pupil, and did credit to his master. Presently the master went away to study churches on

the continent of Europe, especially seeking new designs which might enrich the already varied beauty of the pillars in Roslin. While he was away the 'prentice carved a pillar, the most beautiful of all: and it stands to this day the most admired feature of that richly decorated building. That was in the days of craftsmanship and true apprenticeship. Then the master-craftsman sought to teach his pupils, not by rules and regulations, though these were not neglected, but by that watchful care and ready counsel which can only come of personal contact; till presently the pupil has caught, he knows not exactly how, the secret of the craft, and his feet are set on the road by which he will become a master-craftsman himself. But this will never happen if the lad is a stubborn lad, nor if he thinks he knows it all already, nor if he does not want to learn, nor if he has no reverence for the craft.

That is surely the first necessity—a desire to know, a seeking mind and heart. Sometimes it seems as though that was the chief lack in our days. People are apparently content to live very much on the surface of life. Yet, if they only understood it, the “secret of the Lord” makes the surface of life worth a

great deal more, for it is not something remote from daily life. As Miss Evelyn Underhill said in her Broadcast Talks, "when we lift our eyes from the crowded by-pass to the eternal hills, how much the personal and practical things we have to deal with are enriched." Not only do we see them in their true proportions, but we have the courage and insight to deal with them aright, and from being meaningless details they become the channel and the expression of an eternal purpose. "The meaning of our life is bound up with the meaning of the universe."

The realization of the life of the spirit may come to us in many ways. It may be the result of some experience of joy or sorrow, a sudden awakening to the fact that this life and its affairs are not everything. Or it may come through quiet reverie which turns into a deep meditation on the meaning of life and prove in the end to be the means of a divine revelation to us; our eyes are opened and we see, dimly at first, truth to which we have been completely blind.

There is one way quite necessary if communication between ourselves and the unseen world is to be kept open, and that is

the way of prayer. The essential thing in Christian prayer is not petition, but the sense of being in communion with God our Heavenly Father. Our prayers depend on our conception of the character of God and of His relations with us. The heathen thinks of his god as a Being to be propitiated or cajoled, a Being sometimes well-disposed and sometimes malevolent. Many Christians seem to think of God in a way somewhat similar. His will for us is not always the best, and we must try to change it to what we see would tend more for our welfare. We must ask Him for what we want and hope that we shall get it, and prayer consists, they think, in this asking for things which we know we want and hope we shall get.

Where Christian prayer soars above this idea is in its thought of God as our Father and ourselves as His children. His will for us is always the best, and though as His children we want to tell Him of our needs, and though without our prayers expressing the faith which makes a channel for His gifts God is often unable to give what He is waiting to bestow, yet the essential thing in our prayers is not the asking for things but the communion with God.



There are some lines at the beginning of a poem by S. T. Coleridge which express very beautifully this sense of communion:—

“Ere on my bed my limbs I lay  
It hath not been my wont to pray  
With moving lips and bended knees;  
But silently, by slow degrees,  
My spirit I to Love compose,  
In humble trust mine eyelids close,  
In reverential resignation.  
No wish conceived, no thought expressed,  
Only a sense of supplication;  
A sense o’er all my soul imprest  
That I am weak but not unblest,  
Since in me, round me, everywhere,  
Eternal strength and wisdom are.”

That utter trust that in me, round me, everywhere, eternal strength and wisdom are, is at the heart of all true prayer.

This being so, Christian prayer is not occasional or spasmodic, but a habitual attitude of mind, expressing itself in regular times of prayer or forms of prayer, but not confined to these times. It is the habit of referring everything to the Will of God from day to day, even from hour to hour. I remember reading, perhaps thirty years ago, an article on prayer in some magazine, in which

the writer said that "to the man who lives by prayer the emergencies of life are apt to be few," and those words have helped me very much to a truer understanding of prayer. Prayer is not for use only in emergencies, and the habit of prayer so sustains and strengthens the spirit that we are not so easily taken by surprise. It is true that when we are at our wits' end, like the sailors in the psalm, we may cry unto the Lord in our trouble and find He delivers us out of our distress. But our faith in God and our belief in prayer do not depend upon the frequency with which our extremity proves to be God's opportunity. Rather do they depend on the fact that day by day we find ourselves being sustained and encouraged. There are many men and women who can testify to this, men and women of simplicity, purity, calm and steadfast trust in God. And if they be false witnesses, where shall we look for the true?

The spirit of prayer will naturally express itself in prayer for others. Prayer for others is a natural outcome of our love for them. Many a man who never prays for himself finds himself praying for others, either in spoken words or in the instinctive attitude of his mind and heart in regard to them. A

father who never prays for himself may express the intense desire of his heart in the exclamation, "God bless my son!" In that exclamation there is both his love for his son and also his sense, perhaps only vaguely realized, that for God to bless his son would mean his son's highest good. Or again, a rush of sympathy for some friend in trouble may turn someone's heart towards God on that friend's behalf: "God comfort and sustain and help him." Indeed, when we think of it, we should feel a definite remissness if we did not pray for those we love when we knew them to be in any special need of our prayers; and to people to whom prayer is habitual and not spasmodic, prayer for others is a necessary and natural part of it, if not in fact most of it.

How natural and beautiful are the references to prayer for others in the New Testament. One of the charming things in the most personal and intimate of St. Paul's letters, the one to the Philippians, is his expression of his love for them in prayer. "Always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making request with joy." This he did because he "had them in his heart." To the Romans he says he remembered them always in his prayers; and to the Ephesians, "I cease not

to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." For the Jews to whom by birth and nurture he belonged, "My heart's desire and my supplication to God is that they may be saved." It is all quite natural and spontaneous.

"For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them  
friends?"

This desire to help others by prayer may lead to more and better prayers for ourselves; better prayers, in the sense of prayer for better things. "For their sakes I sanctify myself," said Jesus. For the sake of our desire to help others, to give something to others that they really need, we long to be better men ourselves. Dr. Fosdick, whose little book *The Meaning of Prayer* still seems to me one of the most helpful books on prayer ever written, has a comment on the parable of the importunate householder who besought a friend at midnight to lend him three loaves, not for his own use but because he had a friend arrived at his house hungry from a journey. The need of another has made

him feel his own poverty. "I have nothing to set before him":

"How much such praying ought to be done: by parents who feel their insufficiency in meeting their children's deepest needs, by friends who take seriously the fine possibilities of mutual service, by every teacher or minister or physician who deals intimately with human lives, by all in responsible positions in the social or political life of a community. Many of us, like the man in the parable, do not see how empty our cupboards are until a friend 'comes to us from a journey,' and then our barren uselessness, our ill-equipped spirits, our meagre souls shame us."

It is so. Some of us might be tempted to be very well content with ourselves if it were not for those whom if we were better men we might help so much more worthily.

Prayer for others liberates a man's soul. What hymn is it that speaks of "a heart *at leisure from itself* to soothe and sympathize"? There is a striking sentence in *Job*: "Jehovah turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." A man cannot be in captivity to envy, jealousy, or any uncharitableness if his heart is turned to God in prayer for others. No vindictive mood can survive that, for

the generous impulse which leads to prayer is strengthened and deepened by the prayer. In obedience to a good impulse he prays, and he rises from his knees a better man. As William Law put it, "Intercession is the best arbitrator of all differences, the best promoter of true friendship, the best preservative and cure against all unkind tempers, all angry and haughty passions." What a sweeter, cleaner world this would be if unkind tempers, angry and haughty passions could be purged from men's hearts; wherefore brethren, pray for one another. So we pray for our city, our country, for all the world:

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

Peace be within thy walls and plenteousness within thy palaces.

For my brethren and companions' sakes I will wish thee prosperity.

Yea because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good."

The spirit of prayer can hardly exist without merging into a desire to worship. Worship, rightly understood, is the highest activity of the mind and soul of man. It is difficult to

define worship, except by saying that it is more than reverence and more than praise and more than thanksgiving, and includes all these. It is both an emotion and an activity. It is something felt and something done. When the Psalmist says, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name," he is calling his soul to an act of worship, and there is much significance in the words, "all that is within me." When a man's whole being is engaged in adoration of God, recognized as infinitely higher and greater than his mind can comprehend, that is worship. Clearly that is an activity. His mind and soul are consciously directed towards the object of worship. At the same time it is an emotion which, passively, he experiences.

One of the first results of the shared experience of the early Christians was a great enrichment of their sense of worship. The realization of the presence of the risen Christ when two or three were gathered together in His name was the prime cause of this. In his book, *The Spirit of Worship*, Friedrich Heiler has a very stirring chapter on the united worship of the early Church. He says: "We can scarcely form any adequate conception

of the overflowing life and vigour of the public worship of the first three centuries. But we can divine something of its secret when we listen to the doxologies of the Pauline Epistles and the anthems of the New Testament Apocalypse, in which we have a clear echo of the earliest Christian worship." He goes on to speak of the consciousness in the assembled community of their union with the great invisible church of Christ. The local community knew itself to be one in prayer and praise with the choir of angels, who surround the throne of God, and with the brethren who had been made perfect, and was thrilled with the thought of the mighty choir in heaven and on earth glorifying the eternal Father through Jesus Christ.

This enthusiasm in worship derived directly from their faith in the immediate presence of Christ and from their love for Him. This it was which united them. They were one body, of which Christ was the Head. As living stones they were built together into a spiritual house in which Christ dwelt. It was from personal devotion to the Lord Jesus that all their joyous fellowship sprang. And since those days the experience has been repeated when men and women have met together for



prayer and worship inspired by the same devotion.

I have written in a previous chapter of the need for a revival of the sense of obligation to Church membership. This revival will probably only be realized when there is a reawakening of the need to worship. For the central activity of the Church is worship, on which everything else depends.

In one Anglican Diocese there has been issued, following the Archbishop's Appeal, a suggested Rule of Life for the individual communicant member of the Church. It begins with this statement:—

“As a communicant member of Christ's Church, I desire to take Jesus Christ as my Master and Leader throughout life, and I hereby pledge my loyalty to Him—cost what it may—in my home, in my work, and in my friendships.”

“I acknowledge that to follow Christ loyally I need the aid of His Church into which He has called me, and through which He helps me and comes to me.”

Then follows the first of the promises:—

“I will worship each Sunday with Christ's family, unless prevented by illness or duty,

keeping Holy Communion as the centre of my worship."

I am sure that this is the right promise to put first. If a professing Christian and Church member cannot be faithful in his worship of God in church, experience proves that he cannot be trusted to be faithful in any other obligation of his Church-membership. The oft-repeated statement that a man can worship God just as well in the green fields or under the starry dome of heaven just as well as he can worship in church is no doubt profoundly true. Only let it be honestly admitted that very few of those who quote this maxim do what it says. I am quite certain that only a negligible proportion of those who spend Sunday golfing, hiking, or motoring set out upon their day's pleasure with any intention or desire to worship God, and practically all of them return without having had a single thought of eternal things all day long. Of course it is a mere excuse. The spirit within them is dead or dying. A resolve to return to the worship of God in the House of God, and to do so with a humble intention to allow the spirit of worship to sink into their souls, would be the right

first step for a great many people towards the recovery of true religion.

I am well aware that there is plenty of room for criticism of the Church's services: the singing is not good enough, the preaching is not good enough, the lighting and heating and seating are antiquated compared with picture-houses, and so forth and so forth. Given that some of this is true, there are at least two answers to it. One is that what anyone gets out of a church service is in proportion to what he puts into it. If people come to church listlessly, carelessly, more ready to criticize the singing of the church or the voice and mannerisms of the preacher than to lift up their hearts in worship, they have no one to blame but themselves if they find the service dull. The second answer may be given in a story told by Canon Peter Green of a lady, a well-known artist and book-illustrator, who said to him, "It is no wonder that my artistic friends stay away from church when everything in the churches is so ugly." He answered, "You have got that sentence the wrong way round. You ought to have said 'It is no wonder that everything in the churches is so ugly when all my artistic friends stay away.'"

How trivial some of these criticisms and objections seem when set against the background of the worship of God in spirit and in truth. Sound judgment and sound character are rooted in reverence for what is good and beautiful. There is no fineness of judgment without reverence, and no nobility of character without worship. Conversely, if a man can enter into the spirit of the psalmist's words and engage his whole being in the adoration of God, he is entering into the fellowship of angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, and the grace of God is with him.

A revival of the sense of a need to worship will mean a revival of a sense of loyalty to Church membership: an urgent need if the Church is to be strong to bear its witness to the world.

Here we are at once confronted with two classes of people: those who have a real personal religion but belong to no Church or Christian congregation, and those who, while professing Church-membership, sit very loosely to their religious obligations.

No one, it may be supposed, would wish to deny that it is possible for a man to have a

real personal religion without its including any sense of obligation to belong to a Church. One would go further and say that a man can have a personal faith in Jesus Christ without recognizing that that must include fellowship in a congregation of Christian people. I must say that, because I have known men of very deep religious character to whom Christ has been really a Lord and Saviour, who have lived, religiously, to themselves alone. I must believe that they pray—I know that they do—and that in some private and personal way they worship. Certainly they have a sense of communion with the unseen, and Christ is very definitely the guide and inspiration of their lives. Yet they belong to no Church, they never go to church to pray and worship with their fellow-believers.

There is no trace of the existence of any such people in New Testament times. There is no indication that an individual believer in Jerusalem or Antioch or Ephesus or Philippi could at the same time profess faith in Jesus Christ and also hold aloof from the local congregation of Christians who met for prayer and worship and witness. St. Paul would have found it difficult to understand the state of mind of such a person, and I think he would

have told him roundly that he was failing in his Christian duty at a time when the united witness of professing Christians against the paganism with which they were surrounded was of predominant importance. I think he would say the same to-day to any Christian who preferred to plough a lonely furrow. He would have said that that was mere spiritual selfishness, at a time when a growing secularism was a daily menace to all spiritual values. He would have suggested that the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head of the feet, I have no need of you. In fact, the eye may be a very good eye, as the individual Christian may be a very good Christian, but the eye has no place or function or meaning or value except as a member of a body, and an individual Christian might be rather hard put to it to justify the value of his separate existence, not to mention the fact that he can only exist at all because of the environment created by all the other Christians to whom he recognizes no obligations of fellowship.

St. Paul would have said something like that. But he might have said more than that. He might have said that the separatist type of believer had a defective sense of the very

thing in which he professed to believe; and here his words apply directly to both the non-member and the defaulting member. Any spiritual experience brings one into fellowship, spiritually, with all who share it. As a Russian theologian, Khomiakoff, quoted by Father Hebert, expressed it nearly a century ago: "If anyone believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves, he is in the communion of love; if he prays, he is in the communion of prayer. Wherefore no one can rest his hope on his own prayers. . . . If the hand should say that it did not require blood from the rest of the body, and that it would not give its own blood to it, the hand would wither." In other words, spiritual communion is as real in its own sphere as the circulation of the blood in the body, and no man deprived of the environment created by those, both of the past and of the present, whose spiritual life has been real and vivid, could sustain his own independently. The blood would cease to flow and the hand would wither. In literal fact, no man liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself.

Hence the very first outcome of the Christian experience was the formation of the Christian society, not deliberately and as a

matter of policy, but spontaneously and of necessity. Fellowship was the first fruit of the Spirit. To say that charity is a Christian virtue is, as Father Hebert has pointed out, so to understate the fact as to miss the point. Christianity in itself means fellowship. "God has created and established a unity for mankind, through Christ, to draw men out of loneliness, isolation, and enmity with one another into the fellowship of His universal family, a fellowship which exists to express." From this point of view it would seem to be no less than self-contradiction to claim an experience of Christ and at the same time to declare that it can be realized in independence. It is almost equally a denial of the faith to suppose that any one congregation or parish church gives full scope for its realization. What a petty thing parochialism or congregationalism appears when viewed in the light of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, or of certain passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The whole of *Ephesians* is a grand plea that those Christians of the first days should realize the greatness of their vocation as participants in a unity which knows no limit. For as Christ came to preach peace to them that were afar off and to them that



were nigh, and hath broken down all middle walls of partition:—

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

“And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;

“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

“In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

Compare this with such a passage of *Hebrews* as this:

“But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

“To the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”<sup>2</sup>

But, it may be said, such passages refer to an ideal which never has existed, and not

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians ii. 19–22.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrews xii. 22–24.

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to the Church as it now is. Where, in fact, are these visions of spiritual communion realized? And if I answer, nowhere, that only reinforces my plea and my contention. Not until the members of the Church are aroused by the vision to a deeper sense of their vocation can the generality of mankind be expected to respond, and not until those who stand now in isolation, denying their obligations to give themselves to the fellowship, recognize that without them the promises never can be fulfilled, will the whole building fitly framed together grow into one holy temple in the Lord.

## RE-DEDICATION

THE Appeal is now to all men and women, citizens of this country, to recognize certain facts very imperfectly set out in this book, which I now try to summarize: .

(1) The true foundation of all that is best in our country's life *is the religion of our fathers—the Christian faith*—which affirms certain truths about God and man, and man's relation to God; which declares God to be our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ to be His Incarnate Son, revealing to us the Father; Jesus Christ who died for our sins and rose again from the dead to break the bonds of both sin and death. It affirms also certain principles of conduct, by which if a man by the grace of God governs his life he will be doing the Will of God and bringing nearer His Kingdom.

(2) As a result of the spread of a secular materialistic outlook upon life, which has increasingly affected western civilization, there is a serious danger of *the whole moral and spiritual*

*foundation of our common life being weakened*; more than a danger, because it has in fact already been weakened. The character of our civilization is changing, and the change is in the direction of a non-spiritual secularism.

(3) In this matter *the Churches have a heavy responsibility* towards the nation. It is the Church's duty to try to arrest this drift.

(4) *This responsibility is shared*, in the first place by all individual members of Christian congregations, and in the second place by all citizens who care for spiritual values and desire to see them preserved in our common life.

(5) What is true of our common life is only true because it is also true of individual lives. Many men and women lack any sense of direction or purpose in life, and fail to find lasting satisfaction in life, because they individually have become secularized in their habits of thought and practice. Their lives would be *infinitely enriched by a personal religion*.

(6) The first thing needful is for men and women individually to make some resolve, some act of re-dedication of themselves, coming back to the way of God by prayer, worship, Church-membership, and the service of God and man. What the particular resolve

of each may be will depend on many things, both in their interior life and in their outward circumstances. But it should be *the best that can be made*.

(7) In practice this will surely mean *three things in particular*: the recovery of the habit of daily prayer; loyal membership of a Christian congregation for worship and witness, and to receive the ministry of the Word and Sacraments; and some form of active service in the cause of righteousness.

Will the reader of this little book give some thought to these things? He has a responsibility which he cannot evade. If the considerations herein advanced have any cogency at all, each of us must *do something about it*.

## SOME PRAYERS

### PRAYER FOR KING GEORGE THE SIXTH IN HIS CORONATION YEAR

*O God, the King of Glory, Who hast set thy servant George our king upon the throne of his fathers; establish him, we beseech Thee, in Thy grace: endue him with the manifold gifts of Thy Spirit: grant that he may not come alone to his hallowing, but that we, his people, may dedicate ourselves with him anew to Thy service: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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*Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Grant, we beseech Thee, merciful Lord, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the wills of Thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*Give me, O Lord, a waking spirit and a diligent soul, that I may seek to know Thy will, and when I know it truly, may perform it faithfully, to the honour and glory of Thy ever blessed Name. Amen.*

*O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly; Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do; that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices; that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*